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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

GRAVINI, STEPHEN MICHAEL

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3622

DATE MAILED: 06/18/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/631,855

Applicant(s)
Richard E. ROWE

Examiner
Stephen M. Gravini

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 3-14-02
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). 2 6) ☐ Other:

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DETAILED ACTION

Requirements for Information

1. 37 CFR 1.105 states: (a) (1) In the course of examining or treating a matter in a pending or abandoned application filed under 35 U.S.C. 111 or 371 (including a reissue application), in a patent, or in a reexamination proceeding, the examiner or other Office employee may require the submission, from individuals identified under §1.56(c), or any assignee, of such information as may be reasonably necessary to properly examine or treat the matter, for example:

- (I) Commercial databases : The existence of any particularly relevant commercial database known to any of the inventors that could be searched for a particular aspect of the invention.
- (ii) Search : Whether a search of the prior art was made, and if so, what was searched.
- (iii) Related information : A copy of any non-patent literature, published application, or patent (U.S. or foreign), by any of the inventors, that relates to the claimed invention.
- (iv) Information used to draft application : A copy of any non-patent literature, published application, or patent (U.S. or foreign) that was used to draft the application.

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(v) Information used in invention process : A copy of any non-patent literature, published application, or patent (U.S. or foreign) that was used in the invention process, such as by designing around or providing a solution to accomplish an invention result.

(vi) Improvements : Where the claimed invention is an improvement, identification of what is being improved.

(vii) In Use : Identification of any use of the claimed invention known to any of the inventors at the time the application was filed notwithstanding the date of the use.

(2) Where an assignee has asserted its right to prosecute pursuant to § 3.71(a) of this chapter, matters such as paragraphs (a)(1)(I), (iii), and (vii) of this section may also be applied to such assignee.

(3) Any reply that states that the information required to be submitted is unknown and/or is not readily available to the party or parties from which it was requested will be accepted as a complete reply.

(b) The requirement for information of paragraph (a)(1) of this section may be included in an Office action, or sent separately.

(c) A reply, or a failure to reply, to a requirement for information under this section will be governed by §§ 1.135 and 1.136.

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2. The Office is requiring submission of information reasonably necessary to properly examine and treat the claimed subject matter under Rule 105. Of particular interest is information used in drafting the present operation including information related to the field of endeavor or business practices used by applicants' professional business ventures⁰, to show the information used in the invention process, and identification of any use of the claimed invention known to the inventor at the time the application was filed notwithstanding the date of the use. Since the application is filed as a small entity status, along with the fact that the inventor has at least other pending applications closely related to the claimed invention and no information disclosure statement was filed other than that which lists one of the many copending applications, it appears that it would be appropriate to require the applicants to provide information necessary to ensure a quality examination may be performed by the Office.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

4. Claims 1-8 and 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed method does not recite a useful, concrete and tangible result under *In re Alappat*, 31 USPQ2d 1545 (Fed. Cir. 1994) and *State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group Inc.*, 47 USPQ2d 1596

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(Fed Cir. 1998). The independently claimed invention is an abstract idea which can be performed without interaction of a physical structure. The independently claimed steps of issuing, accepting, generating, storing, crediting, sorting, determining, retrieving, and comparing does not require structural interaction or mechanical intervention such that the invention falls within the technological arts permitting statutory patent protection. Those steps can be performed by personal skills (i.e. thinking, watching, and speaking) such that the claimed steps can be performed without a physical structure or mechanical object. Because the independently claimed invention is directed to an abstract idea and does not require structural interaction or mechanical intervention, it does not produce a useful, concrete and tangible result, is not permitted under 35 USC 101 as being related to non-statutory subject matter. Furthermore each of the claimed steps can be completely performed by a human which further illustrate that the independently claimed invention is directed to an abstract idea and does not require structural interaction or mechanical intervention. However in order to examine the claimed invention in light of the prior art, further rejections will be made on the assumption that those claims are statutorily permitted.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

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6. Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. In this case, the independently claimed method or system including the steps of generating a record regarding said at least one accepted voucher and comparing information regarding retrieved vouchers to information regarding accepted vouchers contained in said record, a sorting mechanism arranged to sort bill monies and vouchers retrieved from said at least one gaming machine, determining if a total value of vouchers and bills comprises a total value credited for an accepted voucher or bill, or a computing device adapted to determine if a value of sorted and scanned vouchers is the same as a value of vouchers accepted to a container are not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The independently claimed invention specifically reciting those steps is considered non-enabling because the specification does not provide a concrete example or illustrating of those claimed steps. The specification discusses this claimed concept but does not enable one skilled in the art how the steps of generating a record regarding said at least one accepted voucher and comparing information regarding retrieved vouchers to information regarding accepted vouchers contained in said record, a sorting mechanism arranged to sort bill monies and vouchers retrieved from said at least one gaming machine, determining if a total value of vouchers and bills comprises a total

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value credited for an accepted voucher or bill, or a computing device adapted to determine if a value of sorted and scanned vouchers is the same as a value of vouchers accepted to a container are enabled, based on the specification, such that one would know how to make and/or use the invention. However in order to examine the claimed invention in light of the prior art, further rejections will be made on the assumption that those claims are reasonably conveyed to those skilled in the art.

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The independently claimed method or system including the steps of generating a record regarding said at least one accepted voucher and comparing information regarding retrieved vouchers to information regarding accepted vouchers contained in said record, a sorting mechanism arranged to sort bill monies and vouchers retrieved from said at least one gaming machine, determining if a total value of vouchers and bills comprises a total value credited for an accepted voucher or bill, or a computing device adapted to determine if a value of sorted and scanned vouchers is the same as a value of vouchers accepted to a container fail to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The

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independently claimed steps specifically reciting those features are considered indefinite because the specification does not provide an antecedent basis of those steps. The specification discusses this claimed concept but the claims do not particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention because it is considered that, as discussed in the specification in light of the claims, the claims are indefinite. However in order to examine the claimed invention in light of the prior art, further rejections will be made on the assumption that those claims are not indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for the purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

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10. Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by applicant's specification to each of the independently claimed inventions. Since the specification background is customarily used as an introduction to admitted prior art while the claims introduce improvements to the admitted prior art, the independently claimed invention mirrors the specification in subject matter and functionality. In this case the claims contain the same subject matter as the specification background and since the background is normally admitted prior art, the claims and claims depending upon them are considered anticipated by the specification admitted prior art. Claims 1-22 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Koropitzer et al. (US 5,694,323) or Baker et al. (US 5,884,292) and are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Walker et al. (US 6,208,978) or Leason et al. (US 6,251,017).

11. Claims 1-22 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) based upon a public use or sale of the invention. An internet search and a trademark database search has revealed that the claimed invention has been in public use or on sale for more than one year from the filing of the present invention. The first named inventor was involved in a business venture under International Game Technologies (IGT), admitting that the claimed invention was in public use as early as 1994 (through federally registered trademarks), which is before the filing date of the present application claiming priority to late 2000 (based on a world wide web search from igt.com discussing the business ventures of 1994). Thus the claimed invention was in public use more

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than one year prior to the filing of the present invention which includes publication about the first named inventor with respect to the claimed invention. Since the claimed invention has been in public use or on sale for more than one year from the filing of the present application, it is statutorily barred from patenting within the United States.

12. An issue of public use or on sale activity has been raised in this application. In order for the examiner to properly consider patentability of the claimed invention under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), additional information regarding this issue is required as follows: the earliest release date and availability of the above mentioned trademark by the assignee of the claimed invention. Applicant is reminded that failure to fully reply to this requirement for information will result in a holding of abandonment.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

13. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

14. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.

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2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

15. Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over an obvious variation of examiner's personal experience of a method or system of transacting information in a system as provided by examiner's experience as a Metro farecard user of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The claimed voucher, bill monies, bill, or value are considered non-functional descriptive material which will be discussed infra. The claimed gaming machine, sorting mechanism, or computing device are considered automated features of an old and well known manual operation which will also be discussed infra. Since at least 1994, examiner has experience with the claimed invention as a Metro farecard user of WMATA. The claimed method or system comprising:

issuing at least one voucher having a particular value associated therewith;

accepting at a gaming machine said at least one voucher and crediting said value to a player of said machine;

generating a record regarding said at least one accepted voucher;

storing said at least one accepted voucher in said gaming machine;

retrieving vouchers from said gaming machine; and

comparing information regarding retrieved vouchers to information regarding accepted vouchers contained in said record; or

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at least one data storage element for storing data regarding accepted vouchers, including a value of said accepted vouchers, a sorting mechanism arranged to sort bill monies and vouchers retrieved from said at least one gaming machine, and a scanner for reading information associated with said voucher; or

crediting a value associated with an accepted voucher or bill;

retrieving intermingled vouchers and bills which have been credited;

sorting said vouchers from said bills; and

determining if a total value of said vouchers and bills comprises a total value credited for said accepted voucher or bill; or

at least one container for storing accepted bill monies and vouchers with one another;

at least one apparatus adapted to sort said vouchers from said bill monies retrieved from said at least one container;

at least one apparatus adapted to scan said vouchers to obtain value and identification information regarding each voucher; and

a computing device adapted to determine if a value of said sorted and scanned vouchers is the same as a value of said vouchers accepted to said container are part of examiner's personal experience as a farecard use of the WMATA Metro transit system. Examiner's personal experience also includes the claimed bar code information including laser scanning reading, soft count system, high speed scanning, accepted and retrieved voucher reconciliation, unique identification, value comparison, and bill monies/ voucher comparison. The claimed issuing at

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least one voucher having a particular value associated therewith, crediting a value associated with an accepted voucher or bill, and at least one container for storing accepted bill monies and vouchers with one another is considered equivalent to a Metro farecard dispenser issuing examiner a farecard with a particular value in exchange for processing a monetary transaction such that the dispenser acts as a container for storing accepting bill monies (i.e. cash transactions) and vouchers (i.e. upgrading used farecards) while crediting a transit fare value associated with an accepted farecard voucher or bill (as change for a cash overpayment transaction). The claimed accepting at a gaming machine said at least one voucher and crediting said value to a player of said machine, retrieving intermingled vouchers and bills which have been credited and sorting said vouchers from said bills, and at least one apparatus adapted to sort said vouchers from said bill monies retrieved from said at least one container is considered equivalent to a Metro turnstile acting as a patentably equivalent gaming machine accepting a farecard voucher and crediting the examiner transit player of said machine such that intermingled farecard vouchers and cash bills coupleable to the Metro farecard dispenser sort farecards and cash thereof. The claimed generating a record regarding said at least one accepted voucher, determining if a total value of said vouchers and bills comprises a total value credited for said accepted voucher or bill, and at least one apparatus adapted to scan said vouchers to obtain value and identification information regarding each voucher is considered equivalent to the WMATA interface identifying the farecard smart card at an entry transit point and recognizing the same card as it is couple to a turnstile at an exit transit point such that a record is generated to account for the accepted

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farecard voucher and determine its total value. The claimed storing said at least one accepted voucher in said gaming machine then retrieving vouchers from said gaming machine then comparing information regarding retrieved vouchers to information regarding accepted vouchers contained in said record, at least one container for storing accepted bill monies and vouchers with one another then at least one apparatus adapted to sort said vouchers from said bill monies retrieved from said at least one container then at least one apparatus adapted to scan said vouchers to obtain value and identification information regarding each voucher and a computing device adapted to determine if a value of said sorted and scanned vouchers is the same as a value of said vouchers accepted to said container, and at least one data storage element for storing data regarding accepted vouchers, including a value of said accepted vouchers, a sorting mechanism arranged to sort bill monies and vouchers retrieved from said at least one gaming machine, and a scanner for reading information associated with said voucher is considered equivalent to the WMATA farecard dispenser coupling the farecard to the turnstile network for adding or subtracting value to a farecard. The claimed bar code information including laser scanning reading, soft count system, high speed scanning, accepted and retrieved voucher reconciliation, unique identification, value comparison, and bill monies/ voucher comparison are old and well known and considered part of Metro farecard use included in examiner's experience. The claimed invention has been performed by the examiner long before the filing of the present invention except for the specifically recited voucher, bill monies, bill, or value. Those recitations are considered non-functional descriptive language and are not given patentable weight. It would

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have been obvious to those skilled in the art of the claimed method and system to use those recitations to seek patent protection. The non-functional descriptive language including voucher, bill monies, bill, or value are considered merely information or data item necessary to provide an accounting for establishing and maintaining an information basis in the field of endeavor claimed by the applicants. This non-functional descriptive language difference is only found in the nonfunctional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited. The claimed voucher, bill monies, bill, or value would be performed the same regardless of the data or information. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 32 F. 3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994). Therefore it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to claim a method or system particularly voucher, bill monies, bill, or value, because such data or information does not functionally relate to the steps in the method or system claimed and because the subjective interpretation of the data does not patentably distinguish the claimed invention. Also, the claimed invention contains automated features, such as gaming machine, sorting mechanism, or computing device, which are obvious variations to the examiner's experience that is so old and well known that the examiner will use Official notice to obviate that claimed subject matter. Gaming machine, sorting mechanism, or computing device, as discussed in the specification, are interpreted to encompass automated electronic communications associated with electronic network and/or computer to server communications. The claimed invention, recited by the applicant, has been provided to examiner by personal

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experience long before the filing of applicant's invention. Examiner notes that it is old and well known to those skilled in the art of the claimed method or system that it would have been obvious to claim the invention as recited by the applicant, in order to overcome the explicit teachings of examiner's personal experience discussed supra. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the automated claimed method or system since those features, particularly gaming machine, sorting mechanism, or computing device, are merely automated features of a concept that is old and well known. Please see *In re Venner*, 262 F.2d 91, 95, 120 USPQ 193, 194 (CCPA 1958) in which the court held that broadly providing an automatic or mechanical means to replace a manual activity which accomplished the same result is not sufficient to distinguish over the prior art. The motivation to combine applicants claimed invention with the services offered by examiner's experience with WMATA Metro transit use is to allow greater transaction efficiency capabilities through electronic mediums, while transferring information, which clearly shows the obviousness of the claimed invention.

Double Patenting

16. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686

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F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970);and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

a timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. a terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

17. Claims 1-22 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-65 of copending application 09/993,163, as being unpatentable over claims 1-38 of copending application 10/044,218, as being unpatentable over the pending claims of copending application 09/544,884, or as being unpatentable over claims 1-38 of copending application 09/924,250. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the present application contains the an obvious variation recitation in claim language as applied to the copending application. The present application and each of the patented inventions perform the same function in the same way with the same result.

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This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

18. Claims 1-22 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-19 of US Patent 6,406,023 or as being unpatentable over claims 1-45 of US Patent 6,394,907. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the present application contains the an obvious variation recitation in claim language as applied to the patented inventions by the instant inventor. The present application and each of the patented inventions perform the same function in the same way with the same result.

Conclusion

19. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Steve Gravini whose telephone number is (703) 308-7570 and electronic transmission / e-mail address is "steve.gravini@uspto.gov". Examiner can normally be contacted Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **If applicants choose to send information by e-mail, please be aware that confidentiality of the electronically transmitted message cannot be assured.** Please see MPEP 502.02. Information may be sent to the Office by facsimile transmission. The Official Fax Numbers for TC-3600 are:

After-final	(703) 872-9327
Official	(703) 872-9326
Non-Official/Draft	(703) 872-9325


STEPHEN GRAVINI
PRIMARY EXAMINER

smg
June 13, 2003